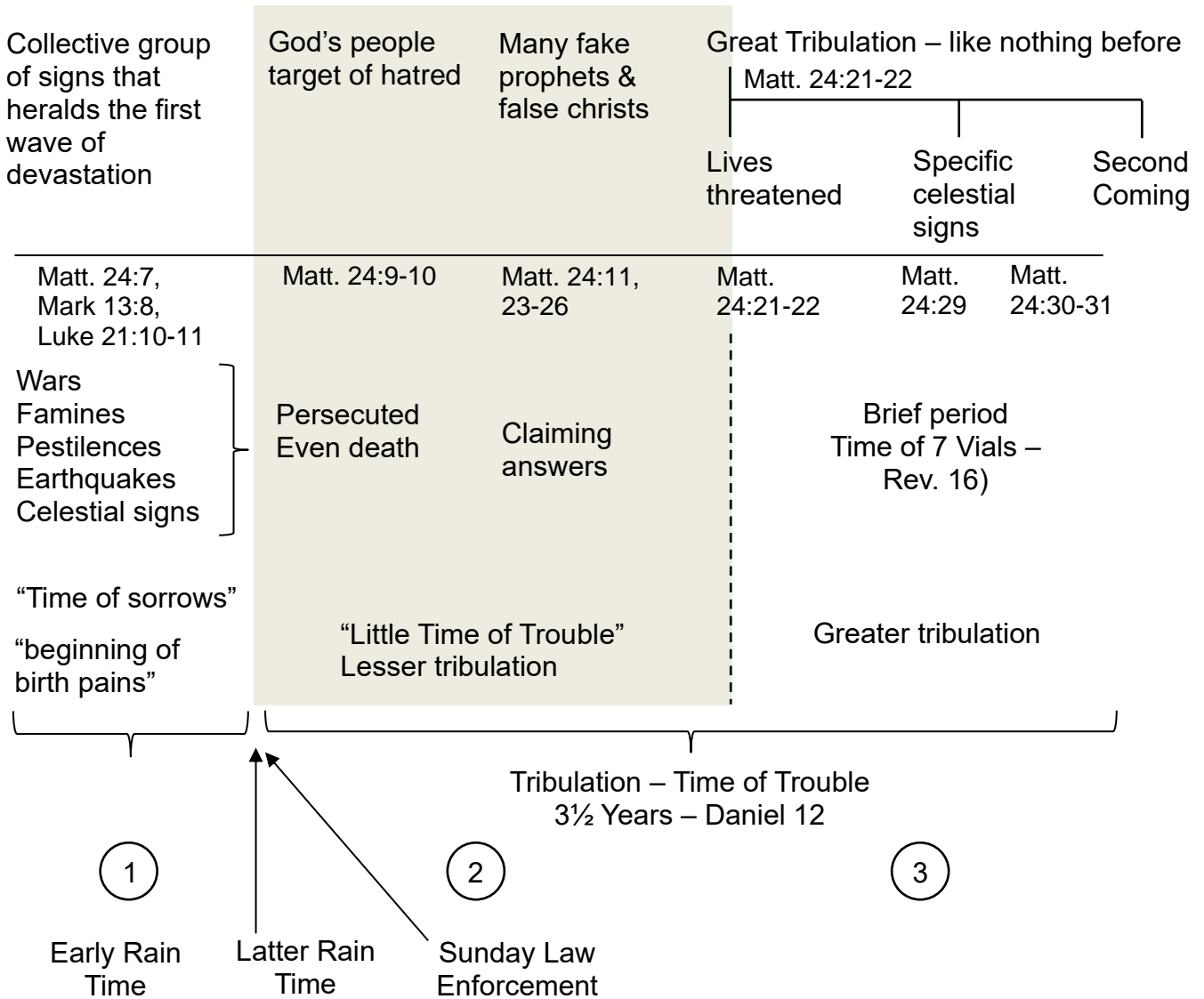


Time of Tribulation

Introduction

In Christ's Olivet discourse He alluded to **three distinct periods** of tribulation or, as some call it, "times of trouble."



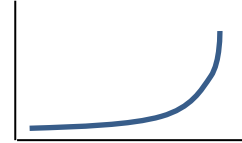
This graph represents the sequence of those end-time periods.

Focusing on These Distinct Periods

Period Number 1

“For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows” (Matthew 24:7-8).

- The “*beginning of sorrows*” actually means:
- Onset of labor.
- Labor comes as an exponential curve.



Luke, in referencing similar issues said:

- “*And when these things **begin** to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh” (Luke 21:28).*
- How do we know what “begin” means? Clearly, a definable trend is present. It is mathematical.

In the **1975–1980** period major devastating changes in this planet’s history began!

Wars

1. 1977–1979: Iranian Revolution (supported by the United States) led to the:
 - Fall of the Shah of Iran – who was sympathetic to Christians.
 - By April 1979 a new “Islamic Republic” began.
 - Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini became its supreme leader.
 - This marked the onset of Islamic moves to infiltrate the world with terror activity.
2. With the fall of Saddam Hussain of Iraq (April 2003) (who also supported Christianity), the lynching of Muammar Gaddafi in Libya (October 2011) and the Egyptian revolution (January 2011), the checks and balances of power in the Middle East crumbled. An exponential curve of devastation has evolved.

Christian Persecution and Martyrdom Accelerated

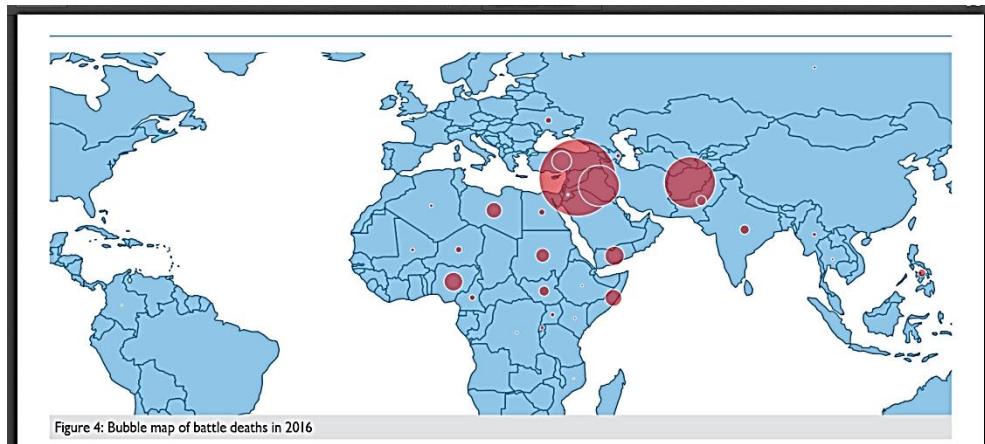
The number of Christians in Iraq plummeted from 1.8 million to 200,000 as thousands of refugees escaped the country, especially to Syria. After the Obama administration began funding Islamic terrorists in Syria, who opposed the Assad regime (2009), thousands of Christians were martyred as ISIS established its footing. Those horrors quickly spread to other Middle East countries.

- ISIS may be gone now in Syria (October 2017), but its influence around the world is alive.

- As of 2013 over one hundred million believers in Christ have suffered or continue to suffer ruthless persecution globally, mainly from Islamic forces.
- One of the worst persecutors has been a U.S. ally, Saudi Arabia! It is yet to be seen if the new crown prince, Mohammed bin Salman, will make a difference.
- The Obama administration then helped overthrow the Christian President of the Ivory Coast, replacing him with a Muslim leader. He subsequently slaughtered countless innocent Christians.¹

By January, 2016, the number of martyrs around the world tripled in just two years.² During 2016 over 1329 Christian churches were damaged or destroyed and 1207 known Christians purposefully murdered. A pastor from the Christian Missionary Alliance in Damascus said that a “thick, dark evil” has invaded Christianity.³

Areas where the most deaths of Christians have occurred is shown on this map:



4

Terrorist organizations surfaced when the Iranian revolution succeeded. This began changing the Middle East and spread quickly throughout the world. These include (among a score of State Department and United Nation lists):

- Al-Qaeda
- Al-Shabaab
- Muslim Brotherhood
- Al-Nusia
- Boko-Haram
- Hamas
- Hezoballah
- ISIS

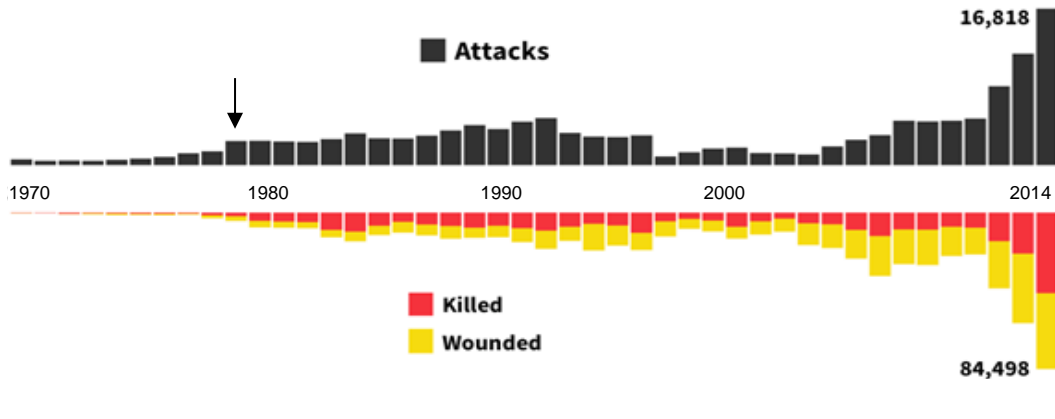
¹ <https://www.thenewamerican.com/culture/faith-and-morals/item/17417-christian-martyrdom-doubled-in-2013-persecution-growing>

² <https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/the-number-of-christian-martyrs-has-tripled-in-two-years-29359/>

³ https://world.wng.org/2017/01/world_watch_list_at_least_1207_christians_maryred_in_2016

⁴ <https://www.prio.org/utility/DownloadFile.ashx?id=1373&type=publicationfile>

The 1978–1980 window shows a major upward trend in wounding and death from terrorism. Here are those global trends through 2014.



Tension around the world has exceeded the ability of peaceful countries to resolve.⁵

“Rulers and statesmen, men who occupy positions of trust and authority, thinking men and women of all classes, have their attention fixed upon the events taking place about us. They are watching the relations that exist among the nations. They observe ***the intensity that is taking possession of every earthly element***, and they recognize that something great and decisive is about to take place--that the world is on the verge of a stupendous crisis.”⁶

- Clearly, the agencies of evil are combining forces.
 - Rapid changes are taking place in this world!
 - A “spirit of war” is everywhere.
- } President Trump appears to be making some headway with ISIS. Al-Qaeda is on the rise.

Of stunning importance: July–August, 2016, Germany, the Czech government, France, Switzerland, Denmark and Norway advised its citizens to start stockpiling food and water.

Why? Each country expects civil war to erupt.⁷ Perhaps Spain should be on that list because of the Catalonia vote.

Early this year (2017) Sir David Venes, author and terrorism analyst, noted that a significant gap between terrorism and counter-terrorism has developed.

- The growth of terrorism has exceeded the ability of numerous countries to resist its onset.
- The number of ways terrorism is bringing harm defies intelligence discovery.

He noted that several global issues defy answers. God was never mentioned.

⁵ <http://foreignpolicy.com/2017/01/05/10-conflicts-to-watch-in-2017/>

⁶ *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 537.

⁷ <http://www.infowars.com/report-czech-government-tells-citizens-to-prepare-for-the-worst/>

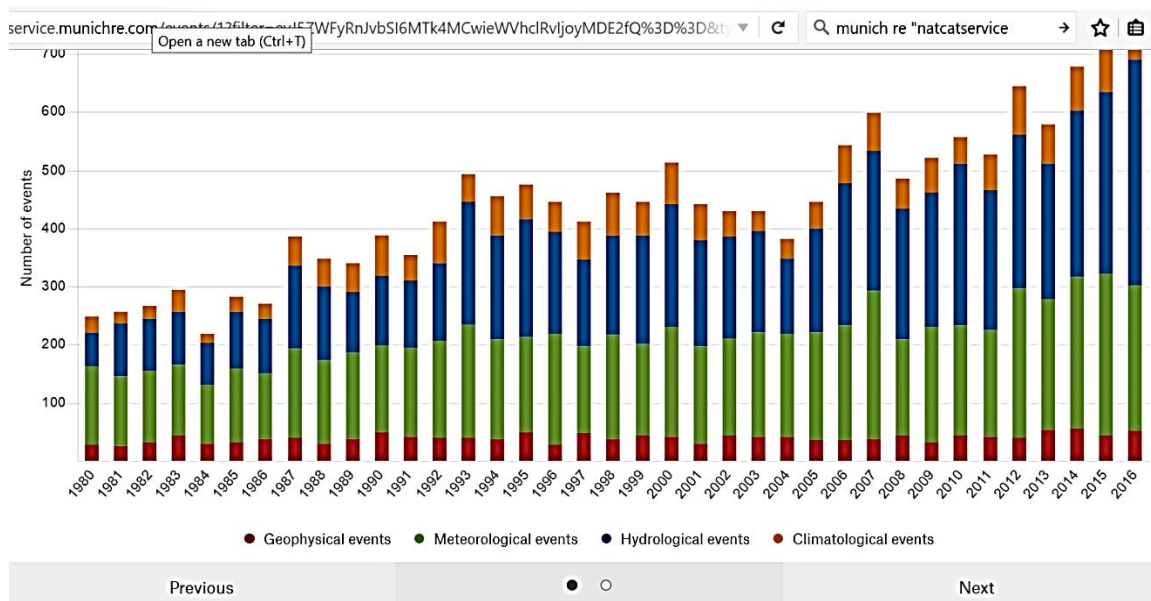
1. Deaths and injuries – enormous scale
2. Human refugee crises (lose of homes and jobs)
3. Internal population displacement
4. Community breakdown
5. Major property damage

8

Calamities

Have there been convincing trends related to “natural” disasters? Many agencies are following this, especially the United Nations, the Catholic Church, and the insurance industry.

Munich re – a re-insurance company that provides world data for insurance companies published this graph early in 2017:



9

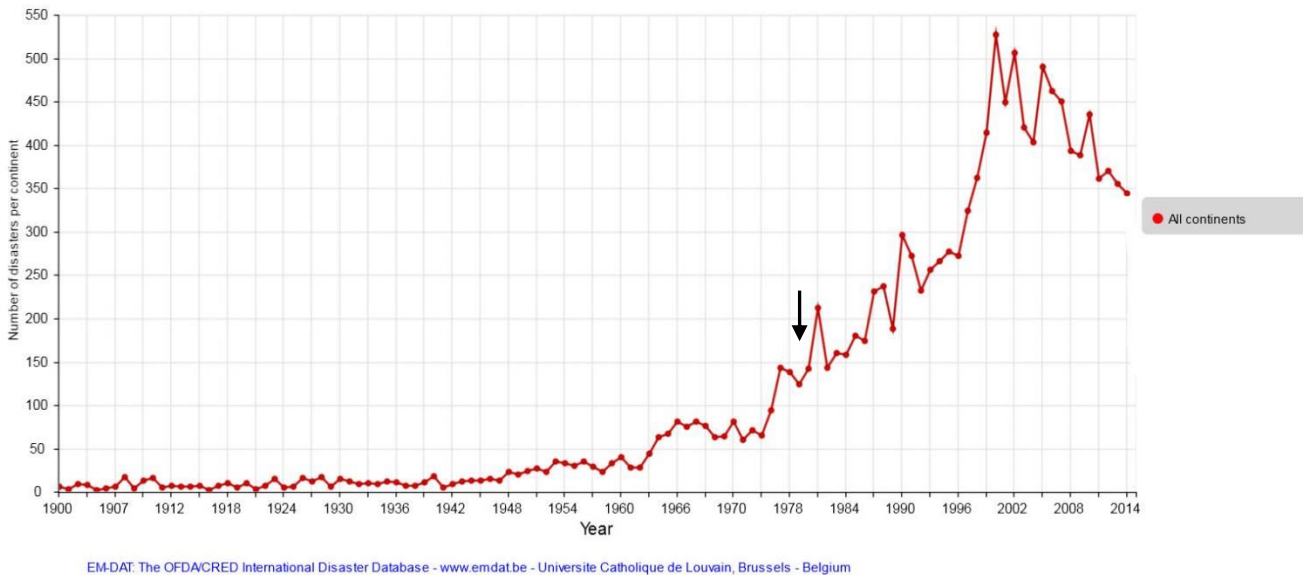
A distinct trend was mathematically noted in ~1980.

- This heralds the onset of the final generation noted in that Olivet discourse.
- Meaning? ***The generation that sees the onset of these signs will see them end.***
- Until the window of 1977–1980 opened **no** significant observable trends in devastation and incidence of calamities were in evidence. The graphs were relatively flat.
- This changed upward during that period.

⁸ <http://georgetownsecuritystudiesreview.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Veness-Global-Trends-in-Terrorism.pdf>

⁹ <http://natcatservice.munichre.com/events/1?filter=eyJ5J5ZWfYRnJvbSI6MTk4MCwieWVhclRvIjoyMDE2fQ%3D%3D&type=1>

Note the timing of the arrow in the next graph from the Catholic University of Louvain, Belgium:



Once again, it appears from this source that the “final generation,” where apocalyptic signs commenced, began in the 1978–1980 window.

Expositor White noted: ***“Even now he [Satan] is at work. In accidents and calamities by sea and by land, in great conflagrations, in fierce tornadoes and terrific hailstorms, in tempests, floods, cyclones, tidal waves, and earthquakes, in every place and in a thousand forms, Satan is exercising his power.*** He sweeps away the ripening harvest, and famine and distress follow. He imparts to the air a deadly taint, and thousands perish by the pestilence. These visitations are to become more and more frequent and disastrous. Destruction will be upon both man and beast. ‘The earth mourneth and fadeth away,’ ‘the haughty people ... do languish. The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant.’
Isaiah
24:4, 5.

“And then the great deceiver will persuade men that those who serve God are causing these evils. The class that have provoked the displeasure of Heaven will charge all their troubles upon those whose obedience to God’s commandments is a perpetual reproof to transgressors. ***It will be declared that men are offending God by the violation of the Sunday sabbath;*** that this sin has brought calamities which will not cease until Sunday observance shall be strictly enforced; and that those who present the claims of the fourth commandment, thus destroying reverence for Sunday, are troublers of the people, ***preventing their restoration to divine favor and temporal prosperity.***”¹⁰

¹⁰ *The Great Controversy*, p. 589-590.

Note: These destructive calamities occur before the Sunday laws. They will reach a point where turning to God seems to be the only recourse. Helplessness has infiltrated the American mind.

During this “generational window” of time, millions have died from “pestilence.” AIDS remains the worst with 37 million people currently infected, over one million die each year from this.¹¹

Pope John Paul II profoundly influenced the geopolitical world shortly after his inauguration, October, 1978 – at the onset of this window of time!

- He exchanged ambassadors with the United States for the first time – 1982.
- He revised the 1917 Code of Canon Law in 1983, **adding to the laws** of the Roman Catholic Church. What he added: “The Church has an innate and proper right to coerce offending members of the Christian faithful by means of penal sanctions.... (Pope John Paul II, Canon 1311). Then added: “The following are to be punished with a just penalty: A person who ... teaches a doctrine condemned by the Roman Pontiff.” (Canon 1312).
- Lest it be misunderstood, the “Christian faithful” included Protestants.
- They are now called “separated brethren.”

Richard Bennett, a former Jesuit priest:

“Due to the totalitarian nature of the Roman Catholic Church, however, none of the non-Catholic citizens of other nations have positions of power within her ruling structure. Thus, although the Holy See has formal diplomatic ties with the various states, Catholic power can be brought to bear covertly against that nation which refuses to defer to her views, particularly those regarding matters of faith and morals. So it is that such power over individuals, held in place by concordats that legally guarantee the teaching, for example, of Canons 752 and 333 of the Vatican *Code of Canon Law* and paragraph 882 of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* eventually can hinder the freedom of religion and worship of **those the Holy See deems to be false churches.**”¹²

- Under Pope John Paul II’s rule, Euro-Russian communism fell in 1989.
- He urged that a Sunday law be enacted May 3, 1998, using civil power to enforce it in encyclical *Dies Domini*.

The spirit and mindset that could lead to persecution is in place!

Do you see why we are standing on the threshold of a world crisis?

- History is about to end. We are in that first tribulation period.

¹¹ <http://www.greenfacts.org/en/aids/l-3/2-hiv-aids-statistics.htm>
<http://www.avert.org/professionals/hiv-around-world>

¹² <http://www.bereanbeacon.org/new-blog/2015/10/17/vatican-prepares-to-control-through-civil-law>

- Jesus Christ will be the only and final solution to a growing number of mankind.

Periods Numbers 2 and 3 – Time of Trouble

This **period**, plus Jacob's Trouble, is referenced in several ways in Daniel and Revelation.

- 42 months – this refers to persecution and perhaps death.
- 1260 days – this is the same period of time that God's people can count down, just like Noah and the 120 years and the Jews 490 years. It is their time to witness.
- Time times half – this refers to solar years and references Day of Atonements by the context.

Again, this includes the last two tribulation periods – but the final and worst is only 45 days, i.e., Jacob's Trouble.

Daniel introduced (page 1) the three-and-a-half-years as the "*appointed time*" (Daniel 8:19, 11:35) (periods 2 and 3):

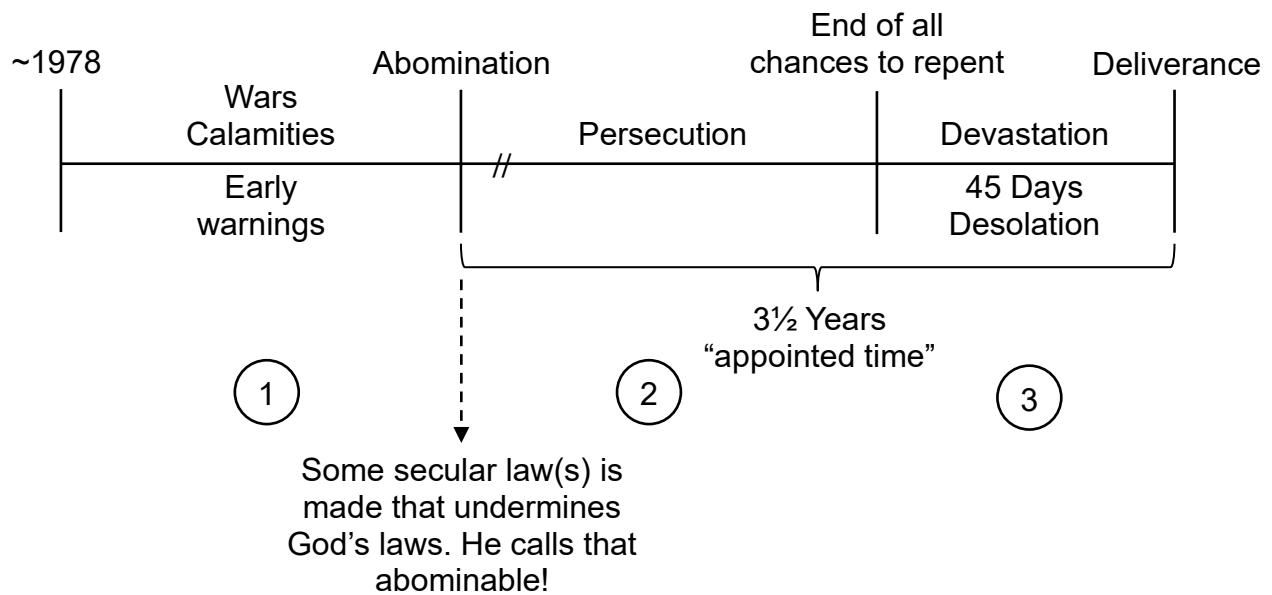
"Then I heard the man clothed in linen who was over the waters of the river as he raised both his right and left hands to the sky and made an oath by the one who lives forever: 'It is for a time, times, and half a time. Then, when the power of the one who shatters the holy people has been exhausted, all these things will be finished.'" (Daniel 12:7 – NET; cf. 7:25).

- "time" here refers to a year ("*moed*" – H – a special set-aside time related to the Day of Atonement).
- Time (one), times (two), half (6 months) = 3½ years.
- "shatters" means harms – restricts God's people.

Example of how this time is repeated in many ways in the Bible (Revelation 11:2, 12:14, 13:5).

- "... *the holy city shall they tread under foot forty and two months*" (Revelation 11:2 – KJV).
- "... *to exercise its authority for forty-two months*" (Revelation 13:5 – NIV).
- Again, this three-and-a-half-year period includes the **lesser tribulation** and a **great tribulation** (periods 2 & 3).

They begin with an "**abomination**" that leads to desolation that Jesus talked about when referencing Daniel (Matthew 24:15, Daniel 12:11).



The best way to uncover what will occur during this period is to deal with Biblical statements directly listed in the order they appear in the Bible.

1. *"He will speak against the Most High and oppress his holy people and try to change the set times and the laws. The holy people will be delivered into his hands for a time, times and half a time"* (Daniel 7:25 – NIV).

- The antichrist speaks against God:
 - Changing His set times and laws –
 - Which relate to the Sabbath and meaning of ancient festivals
- The antichrist will persecute the saints.

"A Catholic magazine stated: 'The Catholic Church has persecuted ... when she thinks it is good to use physical force she will use it ... Will the Catholic Church give bond that we will not persecute? ... The Catholic Church gives no bonds for her good behavior.'" ¹³

- If you think that reference was too "ancient," study the benefits that Catholic Church believes occur when burning heretics at the stake (year 2002)!!! ¹⁴

2. *"It will be for a **time, times and half a time**. When the power of the holy people has been finally broken, all these things will be completed"* (Daniel 12:7 – NIV).

- The work and influence of God's people will be suppressed by the antichrist for three and a half years (Revelation 11:7-9) – similar to the language of Daniel 7:25.

¹³ *Western Watchman*, Dec. 24, 1908. Quoted: Hayward, James L., Sr.; *The Time of the End* (American Christian Ministries), p. 341.

¹⁴ <http://www.aloha.net/~mikesch/burn-heretics.htm>

- At the end of that period, deliverance of God’s people occurs (Daniel 12:1), history will shortly thereafter come to an end and Christ will return.

“The [short] time of trouble is the crucible that is to bring out Christlike characters. It is designed to lead the people of God to renounce Satan and his temptations.”¹⁵

“This earth is the place of preparation for heaven. The time spent here is the Christian’s winter. Here the chilly winds of affliction blow upon us, and the waves of trouble roll against us. But in the near future, when Christ comes, sorrow and sighing will be forever ended. Then will be the Christian’s summer. All trials will be over, and there will be no more sickness or death.’ – 7BC 988 (May 28, 1886).”¹⁶

- We know this is the final end because Jesus shortly says: *“Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried; but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand”* (Daniel 12:10).

3. *“But exclude the outer court; do not measure it, because it has been given to the Gentiles. They will trample on the holy city for **42 months**”* (Revelation 11:2 – NIV).

- God’s church will be persecuted by the *“Gentiles.”* (Same prophecy as in Daniel 12:7.)
- More specifically, this refers to the antichrist and his minions called Babylon that God said became *“the habitation of devils and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird”* (Revelation 18:2).

“The persecutions of Protestants by Romanism, by which the religion of Jesus Christ was almost annihilated [during the Middle Ages], will be more than rivaled when Protestantism and popery are combined.”¹⁷

4. *“And I will appoint my two witnesses, and they will prophesy for **1,260 days**, clothed in sackcloth”* (Revelation 11:3 – NIV).

- God’s people are clothed in sackcloth.
- This was a loose garment of dark goats hair worn when in mourning – using examples of Elijah and John the Baptist (II Kings 1:8 and Mark 1:6, respectively).
 - It is mourning for the sins of the world – and – within the church (Ezekiel 9)
 - For the judgments about to occur (Revelation 14:7).

5. *“The woman was given the two wings of a great eagle, so that she might fly to the place prepared for her in the wilderness, where she would be taken care of for a **time, times and half a time**, out of the serpent’s reach”* (Revelation 12:14 – NIV).

¹⁵ *Our High Calling*, p. 321.

¹⁶ *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 3, p. 107.

¹⁷ *Maranatha*, p. 194.

- God’s church symbolically escapes to a place of protection from Satan (the dragon). It is spiritually protected.
- Satan tries to exterminate her through a “flood” – symbolic of persecution and martyrdom (vs 15).
- God saves the church by neutralizing that “flood” (vs 16).
- That prophecy reveals how angry Satan is against God’s people, characterized by:
 - Keeping His commandments
 - Having the testimony of Jesus (vs 17 – NET)

“God’s people are not to fear. Satan cannot go beyond his limit. The Lord will be the defense of His people.”¹⁸

“Amid the strife and tumult of nations He guards His people ... He measures every trial. He watches the furnace fire that must test every soul ... His people have the assurance that they are safe in His hands ...

“... If you have complied with the conditions of God’s Word, Christ will be to you a refuge from the storm ... The Lion of Judah, whose wrath will be so terrible to the rejecters of His grace, will be the Lamb of God to the obedient and faithful.”¹⁹

6. *“The beast was given a mouth to utter proud words and blasphemies and to exercise its authority for **forty-two months**. It opened its mouth to blaspheme God, and to slander his name and his dwelling place and those who live in heaven. It was given power to wage war against God’s holy people and to conquer them. And it was given authority over every tribe, people, language and nation”* (Revelation 13:5-7 – NIV).
- The antichrist beast speaks words against the Most High – just like in Daniel 7 – even slandering His name.
 - It wars against God’s people.
 - It has world power.

“A form of godliness will not save any. All must have a deep and living experience. This alone will save them in the time of trouble.”²⁰

Summary of This Time of Three and a Half Years

- The antichrist world power blasphemes God and slanders His name.
- He changes Gods laws and times of feasts.
- There will be outright war to harm God’s people (persecution – even martyrdom).

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 191.

¹⁹ *The Review and Herald*, January 11, 1887.

²⁰ *Counsels for the Church*, p. 42.

- The church, per se, will be preserved – the true body of Christ.
- God’s people obey His requirements and will have wonderful things to say regarding Jesus.

Revelation 17 references seven heads on a beast. That is a profound study of papal leaders beginning when Rome’s church and state was re-established.

- The sixth head is described as the “*one that is.*”
- This is present tense – it “currently reigns” (NET Bible notes).

That would be Pope John Paul II. ***The end-time prophecy is to start focusing on the era when he is in power.*** Does his “reign” relate to the 1978–1980 era?

It is during this period that the gospel goes to all the world – and the first five of the seven trumpets occur. That is another study within the tribulation.

Period Number 2 – Little Time of Trouble

See sequence chart.

Period Number 3 – The Great Tribulation – 45 Days
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The classic references for the great tribulation are found in Matthew 24:

- “*For then shall be **great tribulation**, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be*” (Matthew 24:21).
- “*Immediately after the **tribulation** of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken*” (Matthew 24:29).

Tying this with other references, we note this sequence:

The Abomination	Great Tribulation	Celestial Signs	Coming of Jesus
<p>cf. <i>“And arms shall stand on his part, and they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength, and shall take away the daily [sacrifice], and they shall place the abomination that maketh desolate.... And from the time that the daily [sacrifice] shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days.”</i> (Dan. 11:31, 12:11).</p>	<p>cf. <i>“And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.”</i> (Dan. 12:1)</p>	<p>cf. <i>“And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places.”</i> (Rev. 6:12-14)</p>	<p>cf. <i>“And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.”</i> (Matt. 24:30)</p>

The “great tribulation” or time of Jacob’s Trouble begins after Michael stands up (Daniel 12:1).

- **This is understood to mean a transition in divine activity.** Christ’s mediatorial work has ended.
- The antichrist has just been neutralized (Daniel 11:45). Any chance now for further repentance has ceased.
- Some call this the close of probation.

This coincides with another transition in Revelation when **mercy has ended**:

- *“And I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels having the seven last plagues; for in them is **filled up the wrath of God**”* (Revelation 15:1).
- *“And I heard a great voice out of the temple saying to the seven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of **the wrath of God** upon the earth”* (Revelation 16:1).

Some expositors call this the “Time of Jacob’s Trouble.”

- When Jacob was approaching his brother Esau at the end of his long exile, he knew that his life was in danger (Genesis 32–33).

- He was unarmed, defenseless, and fearful.
- He took special steps to minimize harm:
 1. He sent messengers with conciliatory greetings to Esau.
 2. He separated his family into different groups and then would meet Esau alone.
- This was a “little time” of trouble for him.

All alone, he spent night in prayer.

1. Suddenly, he was attacked and began to wrestle with “a man” till the break of day (Genesis 32:24).
2. This unique, brief time was called by Jeremiah “the time of Jacob’s trouble” (Jeremiah 30:7).
 - Guilt ridden
 - Fighting for his life
 - He didn’t think he would survive. This was his “great tribulation.”
3. When he discovered “the man” was Jesus, he cried, *“I will not let thee go, except thou bless me”* (Genesis 32:26b).
4. *“And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved”* (Genesis 32:30).

Jeremiah later prophesied that Judah was doing to face a “time of Jacob’s trouble” (Jeremiah 30:7) if they didn’t repent. The Babylonian captivity followed.

From Daniel 12 we can decipher that this great tribulation will last 45 days at the very end of time.

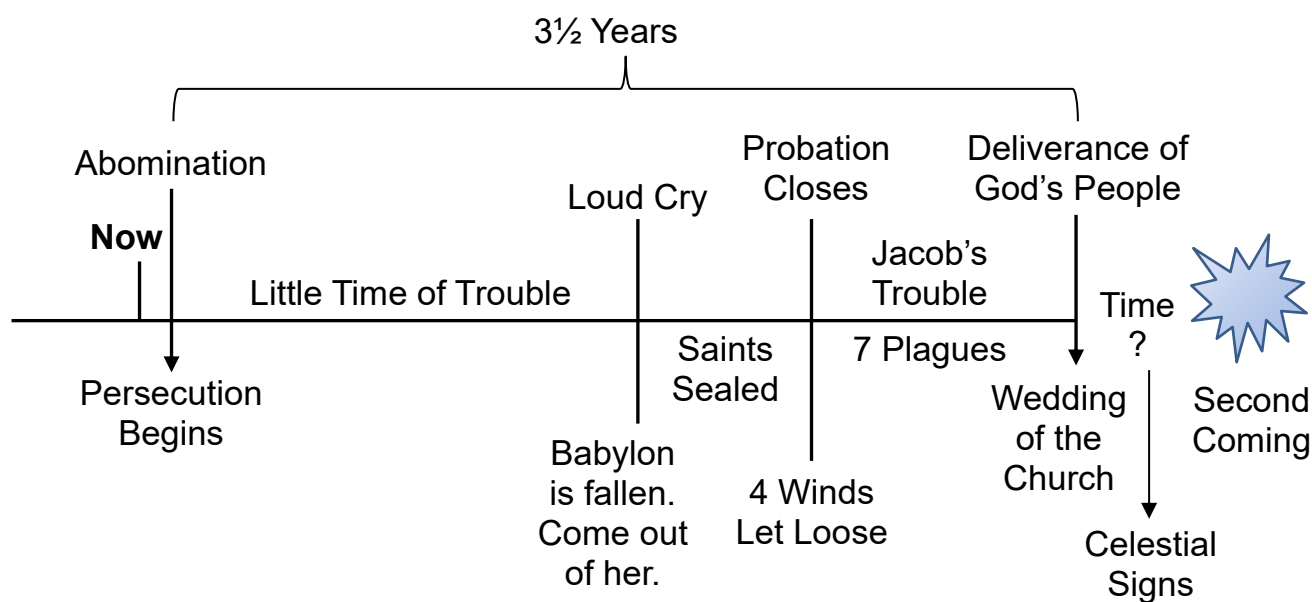
- The people of God will then be plunged into those scenes of affliction and distress.
- *“Thus saith the Lord: We have heard a voice of trembling, of fear, and not of peace. All faces are turned into paleness. Alas! for that day is great, so that none is like it; it is even the time of Jacob's trouble; but he shall be saved out of it”* (Jeremiah 30:5-7).²¹
- The members of the body of Christ approach this period of their last conflict, “the time of Jacob's trouble,” this will be the final period to grow up into Christ, and will partake largely of His Spirit from the “latter rain.”²²
- By then they will be sealed as noted in Revelation 7 and referenced in the Philadelphia Church:

²¹ *The Great Controversy*, pp. 616.

²² *The Review and Herald*, pp. 527-562.

“He who overcomes ... I will write on him the name of My God and the name of the city of My God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from My God. And I will write on him My new name” (Revelation 3:12).

- They have become citizens of the heavenly kingdom!



Deliverance has profound meaning for the saints in Scripture:

1. Persecution ceases
2. Saints will know that Christ's return is imminent.
3. And – it is the time for:
 - a. All sins of God's people to be put on Satan – the anti-typical scapegoat!
 - b. Then Christ marries the church (Daniel 7:13-14):

“Like servants waiting for their master to return from a wedding banquet, so that when he comes and knocks they can immediately open the door for him.” (Luke 12:36 – NIV).

“Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready” (Revelation 19:7).

Pray that we will be invited to the *“marriage supper of the Lamb.”*

Events in that final tribulation:

1. Seven Last Plagues
2. Spiritualism reaches its peak
3. Armageddon
4. Saints long to leave earth
5. They are hungry, weary and terrorized

6. Deliverance
7. Marriage of the Lamb
8. Satan receives the sins of the righteous as the scapegoat
9. Christ comes

Summary

There are three distinct periods of tribulation at the end of time. Many scholars have seen those trials echoing a text in Luke regarding Christ's suffering:

- *"But first must he suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation"* (Luke 17:25).
- Before he comes, there must be suffering (Luke 9:22, 24; 12:50; 13:32-33; 18:32-33).
- Contextually, that suffering is the final test that trains us to trust one hundred percent in God. It is a "furnace of affliction," where the saints come forth more precious than gold (Isaiah 13:12).

The apostle Paul, with deep sensitivity into God's love, projected our friendship into heaven regardless!

- *"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?"* (Romans 8:35 – KJV).
- Luke counseled: *"We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God"* (Acts 14:22).

Our faith must be founded on a victory through Christ:

- *"These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world"* (John 16:33).

The future has started – a difficult path lies ahead – you will soon be faced with challenges/questions ***if you remain firm to Jesus:***

- How valuable is your friendship with Him?
- Is it worth the cost of pain, loss, suffering and even death?

Remember – persecution and martyrdom in many areas of the world have already begun. In fact, 2016 saw a major expansion of this globally according to *Open Doors*, USA's latest World Watch List.²³

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²³ <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2016/01/2016WWLmain>